



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

August 5, 2004

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BLM Announces Forest Ecosystem Restoration Grant

Taos, New Mexico – The Joint Fire Sciences Program has awarded a grant of \$431,000 to Northern Arizona University (NAU) to develop a forest restoration program in north-central New Mexico. Project objectives include:

- Identify forest areas that pose the greatest fire risk to communities and the highest priority fuel reduction treatments.
- Develop tools to help Federal, State, local and tribal agencies coordinate their fuels reduction efforts and leverage their resources to reduce wildfire risks.
- Broaden the information to include pinyon-juniper woodlands.

The Forest Trust served as a liaison between the BLM and Forest Ecosystem Restoration Analysis (ForestERA) team at NAU in developing the grant. The ForestERA is a set of Geographical Information System (GIS) based tools developed by NAU that greatly increase land managers' abilities to use scientific data to plan and prioritize fuel reduction and restoration treatments. New Mexico counties that will benefit are Santa Fe, Taos, Rio Arriba,

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and San Miguel. The Forest Trust will coordinate the project between the agencies involved and the scientists. Funding of the Joint Fire Sciences Program comes from the U.S. Departments of Interior and Agriculture.

“We are ecstatic and thankful for the wide support we received in seeking funding from the Joint Fire Sciences Program,” said Acting Taos Field Manager Sam DesGeorges. “The data and information will be used to focus our efforts in those areas where it will be most effective and cost efficient.”

“We are hopeful that information that will be acquired from NAU will be useful to the local communities that we serve and to our county partners,” added DesGeorges.

Agency cooperators will provide in-kind services in the form of staff time to organize and develop the data on-hand for forest and fuels inventories, watershed and wildland urban interface. BLM will be the lead agency. Cooperators include: The Forest Trust, the U. S. Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, New Mexico Division of Forestry, Taos County, Santa Fe County, Rio Arriba County and San Miguel County, Taos Pueblo, Picuris Pueblo, and The Nature Conservancy.

The BLM manages 13.4 million acres of public land in New Mexico and 47 million acres of federally owned mineral estate. The agency manages public lands and resources to sustain their health, diversity and productivity for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

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